



## Maryland

### G. James Gholson Middle School (ARRA SIG recipient)

### Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS)

Gholson Middle School received \$831,888 in ARRA SIG funds for 2010-11 and chose to use these funds to implement the turnaround model. The school is not designated as a Title I school, yet 68% of its students qualified for a free or reduced-price lunch in 2011. The school is located in a large suburb on the urban fringe of Washington, D.C., and serves 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. In school year 2010-11, approximately 87% of the school's students were African American, 11% were Latino, and 2% were other ethnicities. In addition, 14% were students with disabilities and fewer than 5% were English language learners.

Gholson had been in school improvement in Maryland for more than three years and had been categorized by PGCPS as a “Comprehensive Priority School” (the highest category of need under state criteria) when it received the ARRA SIG grant in 2009. Gholson did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) under the No Child Left Behind Act in 2010 or 2011; however, as shown in the table below, some improvements were made in student achievement in 7<sup>th</sup> grade math.

#### Percentages of students scoring proficient on state tests at Gholson Middle School, 2010 and 2011

Student subgroup	7 <sup>th</sup> grade				8 <sup>th</sup> grade			
	Reading		Math		Reading		Math	
	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011
All students	60%	59%	31%	42%	56%	53%	29%	19%
African American	NA	59%	NA	40%	NA	53%	NA	18%
Latino	NA	61%	NA	54%	NA	57%	NA	25%
Free/reduced lunch	60%	58%	30%	42%	54%	51%	18%	19%

Table reads: In 2010, 60% of 7<sup>th</sup>-grade students at Gholson Middle School scored at or above the proficient level on state reading tests. In 2011, this percentage decreased to 59%.

Source: Maryland Department of Education website: <http://msp.msde.state.md.us/>

### Using a dual principalship maximized capacity at Gholson.

In an attempt to maximize Gholson Middle School's capacity to implement the turnaround model, the Prince George's County Public Schools and the Maryland State Department of Education approved a proposal by Lacy Robinson and Ebony Cross to serve as co-principals of the school. The two women met in a principal training program known as New Leaders for New

Schools. Under dual leadership, “you can essentially make change, effect change a little faster,” said Robinson in an interview for this study.

Robinson and Cross split the leadership responsibilities and support each other at Gholson. Robinson is responsible for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and for issues such as attendance, grading, and reporting. Cross is responsible for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students and for budgeting. They work together on personnel issues. The two principals try to ‘stay in [their] lanes’ but that is not always easy to do, said Robinson. When a student, teacher, or community member comes to one of the principals with a problem, they expect a solution regardless of whose “lane” the problem falls in. “At the end of the day,” explained Robinson, “if there’s an issue . . . whoever’s on deck has to [resolve] the issue.” The key to successful dual leadership, she added, is good communication and “trying to keep each other abreast on what’s going on in the building.”

Robinson believes the co-principalship has proved successful at Gholson and that neither she nor Cross would have been nearly as successful in implementing the ARRA SIG turnaround efforts alone.

### **Gholson has faced challenges and success in addressing school climate.**

Principal Robinson also explained that school climate was one of the school’s biggest obstacles prior to receiving an ARRA SIG award. The school had a history of reaching 1,000 suspensions in one year, with many students suspended repeatedly. School enrollment was on the decline. Robinson explained that when she took over as a co-principal, the school had “graffiti, rat feces, mice infestations, bug infestations . . . you couldn’t tell it was a new building.” Many students experienced not just behavior problems in school, but also conflicts with the law both in and out of school. Robinson said prior principals “could not [get] their hands around the climate and the culture . . . in the building. [The school] became a thorn to the community; became a thorn, I would say, to the district.”

When Robinson and Cross took over the school and began implementing the ARRA SIG reforms, they started with school climate and the “remarketing and rebranding of Gholson.” All students are referred to as “scholars” and wear uniforms that include ties and black shoes to emphasize unity and the feeling of community. The principals refer to the uniforms as “paycheck attire.” They encourage students to abide by the saying, “Everyone works harder to get smarter.” Robinson explained her first day of school and the weeks that followed at Gholson:

*I lined every single child up and we looked at every single child walking into this building, and they had to be in full uniform compliance. And we literally—every single child—we spoke to right before they entered the building. And we did that for a week straight. I shut instruction down and did all climate and culture for a week and a half. [We would ask], ‘What does a Gholson scholar do? How do they walk? How do they talk? What do they say? How do we look out for each other? What is the creed?’ . . . [I]t was literally . . . trying to change the mindset [of the school].*

Robinson said the change in school climate has been the “biggest success” of the reforms at her school and that this success would “absolutely not” have been possible without ARRA SIG

funding. At the beginning of the second year of ARRA SIG funding, she was “blown away” because the school climate was “completely different.” She explained that students in her school are beginning to understand that “somebody believes in them. Somebody will not give up on them. And that they have a future.”

### **Extended learning time and other ARRA SIG-funded resources have proved valuable.**

The most valuable resources funded by ARRA SIG, said Robinson, have been the additional support personnel, extended-day learning opportunities and programs for students, and instructional supplies and equipment, including updated technology. She said ARRA SIG has funded a full-time social worker, a “phenomenal” community outreach program, bilingual personnel, and two full-time student advocates.

Extended learning time has been key to Gholson’s turnaround efforts through ARRA SIG. In the first year of ARRA SIG funding, Robinson targeted extended learning opportunities on students who had been retained in grade for one or more years “to give them extra support.” In the second year of ARRA SIG funding, the school waited for its state assessment data, she said. Students who had scored at the basic level (about a third of the school) or at the proficient level (also about a third) were given an application to attend an extended learning opportunity (ELO).

ELOs were designed to “help draw kids in [while emphasizing] reading, math, social studies, and science,” explained Robinson. Gholson teachers designed courses like cooking with mathematics, science inquiry, reading book clubs, and technology clubs. She said her algebra teacher and consumer science teacher are designing an ELO where students will “make fabric, they’ll make costume designs, and they’ll talk about area, perimeter, and charting.” She added that there will be a “STEM [science, technology, engineering, and mathematics] course after school where the kids will be able to compete with other STEM students across the country.” The point, she explained, is to “look at the [test] scores and figure out what the school needs [are], and then figure out what classes will [meet] them.”

Robinson believes that extended learning opportunities funded by ARRA SIG are paying off in her school. Children in the surrounding community “just need something to do—parents are working, or they’re not at home, or there’s no one checking in on them,” she said. ELOs have been an inspirational source of change for several Gholson students because “they know that somebody’s always here [for them].” The ELOs are offered on a six-week rotation. “We’ll do an assessment in the beginning and the end,” said Robinson. “Some kids will get assessed out, and some kids will be asked to continue on.” Even when the students are not enrolled in an ELO, she said, the school “can’t get them to leave”; the students ask, “When is ELO going to start?”

### **The principals feel community outreach is critical for school improvement.**

The ARRA SIG funded a community office at Gholson that includes bilingual staff, a community outreach specialist, a full-time social worker, and a partnership with an external provider, the Mid-Atlantic Consortium. Robinson explained that community outreach assistance

from Mid-Atlantic has been crucial to the school's turnaround efforts. Principals "cannot turn a school around without a community outreach program; there's no way," she said.

Mid-Atlantic works with Gholson Middle School to reach out to parents and the rest of the community in a variety of ways. Robinson said that her "community outreach people will call parents one-on-one" and that parents are in and out of the school all day long, often headed to the school's community room. Each month, Gholson holds what Robinson called a "Parent University." Mid-Atlantic has helped organize classes through this "university" in computer literacy, Spanish for both English and Spanish-speaking parents, advice for communicating with teenagers, and awareness of signs of bullying. In addition to these services, Gholson was able to fund a three-day summer camp for incoming 7<sup>th</sup> graders in 2011. During this "bridge program," parents learned more about how the school will communicate with them when their children attend Gholson.

### **The principals faced major challenges in restaffing the school.**

Robinson described the task of restaffing Gholson Middle School in PGCPS as "mind-boggling." After she and Cross were hired as co-principals in the first year of ARRA SIG funding, they had only one month to restaff half of the teachers and administrators prior to the first day of school. Robinson explained that at that point in the summer, "anybody that's trying to get a job or trying to get a good position [had] already been placed." She said they complained to the state that they "gave [them] what was left over and asked [them] to turn a school around when [they] did not have the personnel in the building that could assist [them] in doing that."

Robinson and Cross tried some innovative approaches to staffing their school with mixed results. At the last minute, they reached out to a local university with a summer program for people pursuing science and math education as a second career. They thought they would "rather take [their] chances with new teachers than someone that is kind of stuck in a rut." In hindsight, Robinson said she would "never recommend that to anybody" and that turnaround schools need a "balance of both [new and experienced teachers]." She described it as a "very kamikaze way of trying to staff a building." The principals have had success, however, with educators from Teach for America. They also approached their experienced teachers to ask for referrals and recommendations for potential additional staff members.

In addition to finding the right teachers for the job, removing the wrong teachers was also challenging, said Robinson, adding that "it would have been really nice to have a union person who could come and talk to us [about removing staff]." For example, in the first year of ARRA SIG funding she had a teacher who incessantly called in sick, one removed for inappropriate behavior, and one who just did not show up to teach class. Robinson said that it "would have helped . . . [to] have a union person . . . saying to me, 'this is how we get rid of this person.'"

She explained that she and Cross had to eliminate positions due to state and district budget cuts, and they used this situation to remove their less effective teachers. They eliminated nine positions and told teachers, "If this [isn't] the place for you . . . we will assist you in going somewhere else." In other ways, however, the budget cuts prohibited the principals at Gholson from hiring the right teachers for their school. For example, the principals organized a

“turnaround fair” where they spent “a Saturday and three days [at the school] until 11 p.m. going through applications and resumes . . . and couldn’t hire a single person” due to issues related to the budget and union.

### **Turnaround was the “right” choice, but sustainability is still a concern.**

Robinson said the turnaround model was the appropriate choice for her school. “When a school gets so far off track, you have to start over again,” she said, and the process of labeling her school as a “turnaround school” sent a message to the students, teachers, and community that “we’re moving along this change continuum . . . and let’s talk about what your role plays in it.”

That said, Robinson noted that she and Cross are still concerned that they have “done all [of] this work and without the funding [they] won’t be able to sustain it.” She wonders what will happen when her full-time social worker goes away or her community outreach assistance leaves. She fears losing her STEM classes and her creative arts classes. She said that “without the [ARRA SIG] funding, there are just quite frankly facets of this program that are just going to go away.”

### **Commodore John Rodgers Elementary School (ARRA SIG recipient) Baltimore City Public Schools**

Commodore John Rodgers Elementary chose to implement the restart model of improvement when it received \$1,027,065 in ARRA SIG funds in 2010-11. To comply with the restart requirements, the school was taken over by a charter organization called Living Classrooms. The school serves prekindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students in urban Baltimore City. At this Title I school, 89% of its students qualified for free or reduced priced lunch in 2011. The same year, 76% of Rodgers’ students were African American, 17% were Latino, 4% were white, and the rest were other ethnicities. In addition, 11% were English language learners, and 18% were students with disabilities.

Rodgers did not make AYP the year prior to receiving ARRA SIG funds and has been labeled a “Comprehensive Priority School” by the state department of education since 1997. The school did not make AYP in 2010 or 2011; however, as shown in the table below, some gains have been made in reading, particularly for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

#### **Percentages of students scoring proficient on state tests at Commodore John Rodgers School, 2010 and 2011**

Student subgroup	4 <sup>th</sup> grade				8 <sup>th</sup> grade			
	Reading		Math		Reading		Math	
	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011
All students	59%	60%	84%	81%	35%	53%	9%	10%
African American	54%	58%	82%	81%	37%	53%	8%	13%
Free/reduced lunch	57%	59%	83%	80%	32%	56%	10%	11%

Table reads: In 2010, 35% of 4<sup>th</sup>-grade students at Commodore John Rogers scored at or above the proficient level on state reading tests. In 2011, this percentage rose to 60%.

Source: Maryland Department of Education website: <http://msp.msde.state.md.us/>

As previously mentioned, the nonprofit Living Classrooms was chosen as the external management organization (EMO) that would implement the restart model at Commodore John Rodgers in BCPS. Prior to taking over Commodore Rodgers, Living Classrooms operated a charter school called the Crossroads School, provided curriculum enrichment and after-school programs to schools in BCPS, and helped adjudicated youth in Baltimore obtain work skills and a GED. Living Classrooms participated in writing the ARRA SIG grant for this school and brought in a new principal, Marc Martin (who previously worked at the Crossroads School), to restart the school.

Martin provided some examples of the changes in climate at Commodore John Rogers that have occurred since the school received the ARRA SIG funds in the 2010-11 school year. In addition to replacing most of the school's staff, the school began holding student-led conferences three times a year where students would present their learning to their families, rather than holding teacher-led report card nights. Students are now grouped into communities of grade levels and teams that meet once a week. Martin said that the entire school is now focused on one mission: "Commodore to College: 100% for 100%."

Martin explained that the improvement work at Commodore John Rogers has not been without complications. He said that the short time frame for applying for and receiving ARRA SIG funds was "one thing that really limited the amount of success [the school] could have in the first or second year," particularly when it came to staffing his school. All teachers were asked to reapply for their positions after the school entered the restart model, and only three people were rehired, which he felt was essential to changing the school culture. Martin said that he would "never recommend going into a turnaround situation with 11 first-year teachers," but that this was his best option when faced with hiring 50 new staff members in a matter of months. "[T]hose 11 first-year teachers were remarkably better than the staff that was in place," he explained.

Commodore John Rogers is showing early signs of this success. The school was the only turnaround school in the district to meet its performance targets, which resulted in salary bonuses for the staff (excluding the principal.) Martin said that it is notable that although the school had not experienced any schoolwide victories in the past, students made double-digit gains in reading and math in the first year of ARRA SIG funding. Additionally, enrollment at the school has increased by more than 100%. He says that although Rogers is clearly still not a great school, progress has been made.

### **Buck Lodge Middle School (non-recipient) Prince George's County Public Schools**

Buck Lodge Middle School was eligible for but did not receive ARRA SIG funds in 2009. The school is designated as a Title I school, and 86% of its students qualified for a free or reduced price lunch in the 2009-10 school year. The school is located in a large suburb on the urban fringe of Washington, D.C. The school added 6<sup>th</sup> graders to its 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade student body in the 2010-11 school year. That year, approximately 32% of Buck Lodge's students were African

American, 60% were Latino, 4% were Asian, and 2% were white. In addition, 18% were students with disabilities, and 19% were English language learners.

James Richardson, the principal at Buck Lodge, explained that the school has seen drastic increases in low-income students. He said these increases are a “combination of the economy, trends in PG County, housing crisis, [and boundary change that impacted [the] school.” Richardson said that this school year, 2011-12, 88% of the student body qualifies for free or reduced price lunch.

Buck Lodge had been in school improvement in Maryland for more than three years and had been categorized as a “Comprehensive Priority School” by PGCPS when it was eligible to receive an ARRA SIG grant in 2009. Buck Lodge did not make AYP in 2010 or 2011; however, as shown in the table below, some improvements were made in student achievement in reading. The percentage of 8th graders scoring proficient on state tests in math dropped from 52% in 2010 to 44% in 2011.

**Percentages of students scoring proficient on state tests at Buck Lodge Middle School, 2010 and 2011**

Student subgroup	6 <sup>th</sup> grade				7 <sup>th</sup> grade				8 <sup>th</sup> grade			
	Reading		Math		Reading		Math		Reading		Math	
	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011
All students	NA	70%	NA	78%	72%	77%	64%	64%	64%	67%	52%	44%
African American	NA	76%	NA	86%	NA	81%	NA	60%	NA	67%	NA	72%
Latino	NA	67%	NA	67%	NA	74%	NA	65%	NA	65%	NA	44%
Asian American	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	86%	NA	86%	NA	85%	NA	77%
Free/reduced lunch	NA	69%	NA	79%	72%	75%	63%	62%	64%	66%	52%	44%

Table reads: In 2011, 70% of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students at Buck Lodge Middle School scored at or above the proficient level on state reading tests.

Source: Maryland Department of Education website: <http://msp.msde.state.md.us/>

Richardson has worked in PGCPS for more than a decade, and this is his third year as principal at Buck Lodge. His school had received school improvement funds through section 1003(g) of Title I prior to his arrival in 2009; some of these prior funds were used for instructional coaches and other school improvement efforts at Buck Lodge through August 30, 2010. Buck Lodge did not, however, apply for an ARRA SIG award. Richardson explained that the potential benefits of doing so did not outweigh the costs of compliance and the demands of implementing the specific ARRA SIG improvement initiatives at his school. “[I]t’s too much—it becomes more troublesome especially when we can only spend it a certain way,” he said.

Richardson explained that current federal, state, and district school improvement policy initiatives “tend to throw everything at Title I schools, and we’ve tried to streamline the various initiatives that we’ve been asked to implement, and that’s really our goal.” More specifically, the key elements of the school improvement plan at Buck Lodge are centered on building teacher capacity and integrating technology into instruction. His focus is and has been building a system of sustainability by investing in the school’s teachers, he said. Richardson explained that this year the school lost its instructional coaches, which were paid for with alternative governance

and other funds, but because his school has invested in building teacher capacity, it can continue moving forward with its school improvement initiatives. “Would I like more money? Sure,” he said. “But we’ve invested in our teachers to assume that coaching role—now we have the resources we need in the building.” Students at Buck Lodge have shown continuous growth over the past three years, said Richardson. He predicted that they will continue to see growth because his school strategically focuses on building teacher capacity and sustainability of school improvement efforts, regardless of the specific funding streams.

The climate at the Buck Lodge middle school was positive, Richardson said, describing it in this way:

*We have great kids. We've decreased the number of suspensions even in the last year. There are no major issues with discipline so it's really about developing teacher capacity so that they can continue to teach and reach students. When you walk around, it's a great place to be.*

Richardson thought the right schools in Maryland have been awarded SIGs. He reported that his school was doing okay without the continued 1003(g) funds, that the school has been able to maintain its school improvement efforts, and that school climate is simply not a major concern at Buck Lodge.

## Nicholas Orem Middle School (non-recipient) Prince George’s County Public Schools

Nicholas Orem Middle School was eligible for but did not receive ARRA SIG funds. This Title I school serves 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, of which 84% were eligible for free or reduced price lunch in the 2010-11 school year. Nicholas Orem is located in Prince George’s County on the urban fringe of Washington, D.C. In the 2010-11 school year, Nicholas Orem’s student body was 31% African American, 65% Latino, and 2% Asian American. Additionally, 10% were students with disabilities, and 19% were English language learners.

Nicholas Orem had been in school improvement in Maryland for more than three years and had been categorized as a “Comprehensive Priority School” by PGPS when it became eligible to receive an ARRA SIG grant in 2009. The school did not make AYP in 2010 or 2011. As shown in the table below, Nicholas Orem made some significant improvements in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading and math between 2010 and 2011 for both low-income students and all students. However, the school saw decreases in proficiency in reading and math in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

### Percentages of students scoring proficient on state tests at Nicholas Orem Middle School, 2010 and 2011

Student subgroup	6 <sup>th</sup> grade				7 <sup>th</sup> grade				8 <sup>th</sup> grade			
	Reading		Math		Reading		Math		Reading		Math	
	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011
All students	74%	78%	74%	77%	58%	70%	40%	45%	60%	59%	37%	30%
African American	NA	75%	NA	67%	NA	76%	NA	40%	NA	65%	NA	33%
Latino	NA	80%	NA	82%	NA	66%	NA	46%	NA	55%	NA	27%

Free/reduced lunch	74%	77%	76%	76%	56%	67%	38%	44%	59%	57%	38%	29%
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Table reads: In 2010, 74% of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students at Nicholas Orem Middle School scored at or above the proficient level on state reading tests. In 2011, the percentage of proficient 6<sup>th</sup> graders in reading rose to 78%.

Source: Maryland Department of Education website: <http://msp.msde.state.md.us/>

Richard Jackson, principal of Nicolas Orem Middle, has served 14 years as a teacher and 12 years as a principal, including his five years in his current position. The school improvement strategies at Nicolas Orem are focused on teacher professional development, the development of cultural competence (explained below), instructional technology, and services targeted on students with the greatest needs. Each teacher has his or her own professional development plan that is specific to that teacher's context and experience. A major focus of the teacher professional development is on building the competence of teachers in working with students from a variety of cultures. The student body at Nicolas Orem is diverse, rich with students who are newcomers to the United States as well as students who do not speak English as their native language. All teachers have accounts with Rosetta Stone so they can build their skills to become more functionally bilingual. The school offers after-school tutoring programs for students most in need. Jackson also pointed to two other approaches that the school is implementing to improve academics: Advancement through Individual Determination (AVID), an in-school academic program that seeks to close achievement gaps by focusing on college readiness skills and success; and Response to Intervention (RTI), a national approach to identify students with learning difficulties early and provide them with remediation.

Federal Title I funds—including the Title I supplemental appropriation provided through ARRA—and state and local school operating funds are the major sources of funding for Nicholas Orem's school improvement efforts. The school did receive section 1003(g) school improvement funds prior to fiscal year 2009. After the ARRA changed the requirements for section 1003(g) SIGs, the school no longer received funds. As a result, the school “pared down” the amount of teacher professional development and the after-school tutoring program, Jackson said. For example, with the previous 1003(g) funding, Nicholas Orem provided after-school tutoring for all students through approximately 20 teachers who stayed after school. Now, the school uses Title I money to fund a tutoring program, and approximately four to six teachers stay after school. The school targets the program on the students most in need of assistance, based on their achievement results, and supplements the teacher's instruction with computer software programs.

Jackson reported that his school started the application process for ARRA SIG funds but had to make continuous adjustments to its application that did not fit the needs of his school. He described the decision in this way:

*We're better off without the money. As a school that's been in improvement with high needs we're always trying to balance—what are the strings that are attached to this money? It sounds good in theory . . . but with so many mandates and regulations we have to ask, is it really having the impact this it is intended to have? Each school is very different. The kinds of things that I need to do here are different from what should be done in another school in the central part of the county. I may need to spend a lot of money on language immersion and another school may need to spend more on*

*behavioral issues. Most of the time you just don't have that kind of flexibility with this money.*

Jackson felt his school could continue with its school improvement plan more efficiently on its own. Similar to Principal Richardson at Buck Lodge, he cited compliance burdens and costs that outweighed the potential benefits of receiving the grant money. He explained the trade-offs in this way:

*Theoretically, the grant is a great idea. [But there are] the procedural parts of implementing the grant . . . How do we meet the federal and state mandates and do it in these schools with high needs in a way that isn't a burden in these schools? How can we take everything off the table so that practitioners can practice? Can we place these resources in a way that the school's major focus is implementation and the support systems around that are making sure that we can document it in a way that meets muster? Now, we have the implementation and compliance responsibility, and that's so cumbersome that maybe it's not worth what you have to do.*

Finally, said Jackson, school climate is not an issue at Nicolas Orem, in contrast to Principal Robinson's description of the school climate problems at Gholson Middle, an ARRA SIG recipient in the same county. “[W]e don't have a climate issue per se . . . if you walk around we don't have the discipline issues that are excessive,” said Jackson. Instead, Jackson reiterated, a major element of the school improvement plan focuses on cultural inclusion and competence, which meets the needs of the school's teachers and students. He noted that he “got the biggest pushback” about the cultural competence piece of the plan “because that's not quantifiable. But it impacts our student achievement. I had to really defend that portion of my [school improvement] plan when I went to the state.”

In short, Jackson said that since the loss of section 1003(g) school improvement funds, Nicolas Orem's improvement efforts persist, but “our tentacles are just not as widely spread.” Nicholas Orem, like Buck Lodge Middle, has capitalized on its investments in its teachers to make up for the loss of resources such as instructional coaches and extended learning time for students. Though Jackson, like Principal Richardson at Buck Lodge, admitted the school could use additional funding for its improvement efforts, he felt that the requirements associated with ARRA SIGs did not match the needs of the school. He added that the other county schools that did benefit from ARRA SIG grants were appropriately identified and given the funds.

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Based in Washington, D.C., and founded in January 1995 by Jack Jennings, the Center on Education Policy is a national independent advocate for public education and for more effective public schools. The Center works to help Americans better understand the role of public education in a democracy and the need to improve the academic quality of public schools. We do not represent any special interests. Instead, we help citizens make sense of the conflicting opinions and perceptions about public education and create the conditions that will lead to better public schools.

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